

2001 0664
IGSL

REVISED PARTIAL DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT
STUDIES LIBRARY
JUL 18 2001

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CITY OF LAWNSDALE

ELECTRONIC FREEWAY SIGN ORDINANCE

June 2001



PCR



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
State of California and California State Library

<https://archive.org/details/C124925393>

REVISED PARTIAL DRAFT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

CITY OF LAWNDALE

ELECTRONIC FREEWAY SIGN ORDINANCE

Prepared for:
City of Lawndale
14717 Burin Avenue
Lawndale, California 90260

Prepared by:
PCR Services Corporation
233 Wilshire Boulevard
Santa Monica, California 90401
TEL 310.451.4488
FAX 310.451.5279

June 2001



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. PURPOSE OF THE REVISED PARTIAL DRAFT EIR	1
II. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS	2
III. NEW COMMENTS	4
IV. AVAILABILITY OF THE REVISED PARTIAL DRAFT EIR.....	5
V. CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	6
A. Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project—Aesthetics	6
1. Environmental Setting	6
2. Thresholds of Significance.....	15
3. Environmental Impacts	15
4. Cumulative Impacts	26
5. Mitigation Measures	27
6. Level of Significance After Mitigation	28
C. Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would Be Involved in the Proposed Project.....	28
D. Growth Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project.....	29
E. Alternatives to the Proposed Project	30
1. Project Objectives	31
2. No Project Alternative.....	31
3. Alternative Location Alternative.....	33
4. Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative.....	34
5. No Electronic Message Center Alternative	35
6. Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative	37
7. Environmentally Superior Alternative	38

LIST OF EXHIBITS

<u>Exhibit</u>	<u>Page</u>
V.1 Surrounding Land Uses and Angle of View from Nearby Residential Locations	7
V.2 Photograph Location Reference Map	8
V.3 Views Towards the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone.....	9
V.4 Existing Uses Within the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone.....	11
V.5 Surrounding Billboard Signs and Structures	12
V.6 Residential Uses Southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone (Photographs 11 and 12)	13
V.7 Residential Uses Southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone (Photographs 13 and 14)	14
V.8 View from Northbound I-405 of Potential Sign Location	17
V.9 View from Southbound I-405 of Potential Sign Location	18
V.10 Illustration of Viewing Angles to the Proposed Sign from Nearby Residential Areas	20
V.11 View of Crane Demonstration from Residential Areas of Redondo Beach (Photograph 19).....	22
V.12 View of Crane Demonstration from Residential Areas of Redondo Beach (Photograph 20).....	23

I. Purpose of the Revised Partial Draft EIR

The purpose of this document is to recirculate revisions to portions of the Draft EIR prepared for the Electronic Freeway Sign Ordinance and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(a) which states, "A lead agency is required to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the draft EIR for public review . . . but before certification." Significant new information can include the following: (1) identification of a new significant environmental impact; (2) a substantial increase in severity of an environmental impact without the adoption of mitigation measures to reduce the impact to a level of insignificance; (3) a feasible project alternative or mitigation measure different from others previously analyzed that would lessen the environmental impacts of the project but are not adopted; and (4) elaboration where the draft EIR was so inadequate or conclusory so that meaningful public comment and review were precluded.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(a), significant new information regarding the environmental setting, significance of environmental impacts, alternatives, and additional analysis is presented in this document based on comments received during the circulation of the Draft EIR regarding Sections V.B, Aesthetics; V.C, Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes; V.D, Growth Inducing Impact; and V.E, Alternatives, as summarized below. These revised sections correspond to the title and number of the section headings in the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR was circulated for a 45-day public review period commencing on January 23, 2001, and concluding on March 9, 2001.

II. Summary of Revisions

The following revisions to the Draft EIR are included in this document:

Section V.B. Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project—Aesthetics

The Draft EIR concluded that the proposed electronic freeway sign would be significantly larger than existing signs in the area and that some people could find the height, area of sign, location, brightness, and message center components of the sign objectionable (primarily residential areas southwest of the project site in the city of Redondo Beach). This section has been revised to conclude that although aesthetics is subjective and relative to the “eye of the beholder,” aesthetic impacts could be potentially significant and unavoidable to some nearby residents. This section also presents additional information regarding the setting, thresholds, impacts, cumulative impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation.

Section V.C. Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would Be Involved in the Proposed Project

The Draft EIR concluded that there are no significant irreversible environmental changes which would be involved in the proposed project, since there are no scenic, historical, or culturally sensitive aspects that would be disturbed by the full development of the proposed project and the sign would be constructed from common abundant materials. This section has been expanded to support the conclusion that the proposed project’s contribution to significant irreversible changes is not significant due to the incremental use of nonrenewable resources and minimal electrical consumption in comparison to citywide and regional consumption.

Section V.D. Growth Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project

The Draft EIR stated that there are no growth inducing impacts, since the proposed project would not result in the growth in demand for housing or any other services. This section has been revised to examine the potential growth inducing effect of additional traffic on local roadways resulting from additional freeway advertising of local businesses. This section concludes that any incremental increase in traffic generation would be less than significant since this potential effect has been previously analyzed and planned for under the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Plan for the Lawndale Economic Revitalization Project* and the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Project Area Plan Program Environmental Impact Report*.

Section V.E. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

The Draft EIR presented a discussion of alternatives to reduce potentially significant aesthetic impacts. Potential alternatives included a reduction in the height, size (square footage), sign development area, brightness, and elimination of the electronic message center component. All of these potential alternatives were considered infeasible with the exception of reducing the potential

area of development. This section has been revised and reformatted in this document to include a discussion of alternatives and their potential to reduce both aesthetic and traffic safety impacts. The following alternatives are discussed: the No Project Alternative, Alternative Location Alternative, Alternative Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative, No Electronic Message Center Alternative, and Reduced Permitted Location Area. An Environmentally Superior Alternative is also selected among these alternatives.

III. New Comments

Agencies, organizations, and individuals are invited to comment on the information presented in this Revised Partial Draft EIR during the public review period. The scope of these comments should be limited to the above sections in this document that were revised in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(f)(2). For the comments received during this recirculation period, the City need only respond to those that relate to the revised sections of the Revised Partial Draft EIR. The Final EIR will include an executive summary; corrections to the Draft EIR and Revised Partial Draft EIR; and responses to comments received during the initial circulation period (January 23, 2001, through March 9, 2001) that relate to portions of the document that were not recirculated, and responses to those comments received on the recirculated portions of the Draft EIR during the recirculation period for this Revised Partial Draft EIR. All comments are part of the administrative record. The Final EIR will be considered by the City Council for certification prior to amending Section 17.76 of the Lawndale Municipal Code and construction of an electronic freeway message sign.

IV. Availability of the Revised Partial Draft EIR

This document has been distributed to the State Clearinghouse and other agencies, organizations, and individuals on the original distribution list provided in Section VI of the Draft EIR and on file with the Community Development Department. This document is also available for review during regular business hours at the following locations in the City of Lawndale:

City of Lawndale Community Development Department
14717 Burin Avenue
Lawndale, California 90260
Contact Person: John Hemer, Community Development Director

County of Los Angeles Public Library
Lawndale Branch
14615 Burin Avenue
Lawndale, California 90260

V. Consideration and Discussion of Environmental Impacts

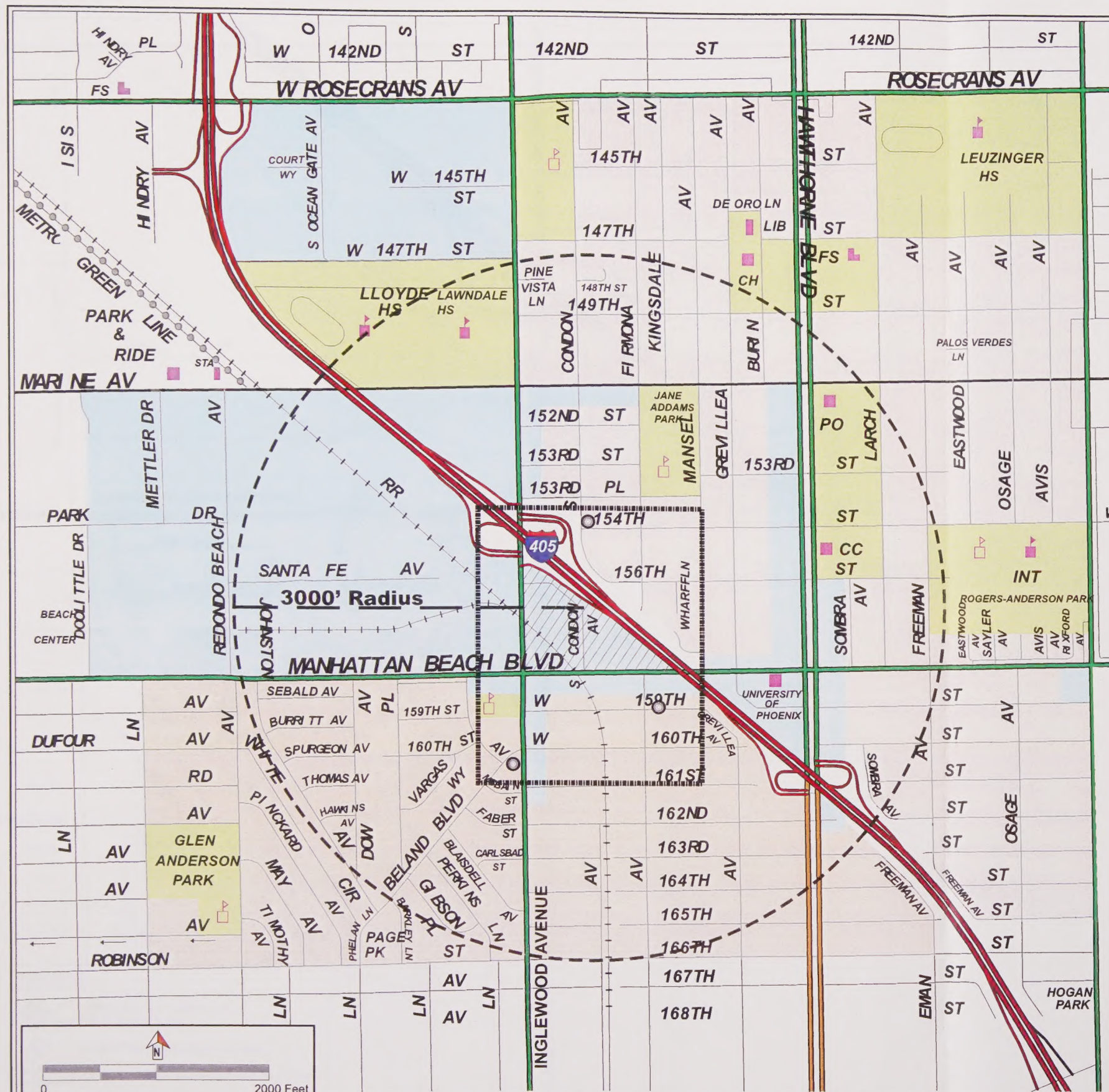
A. Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project—Aesthetics

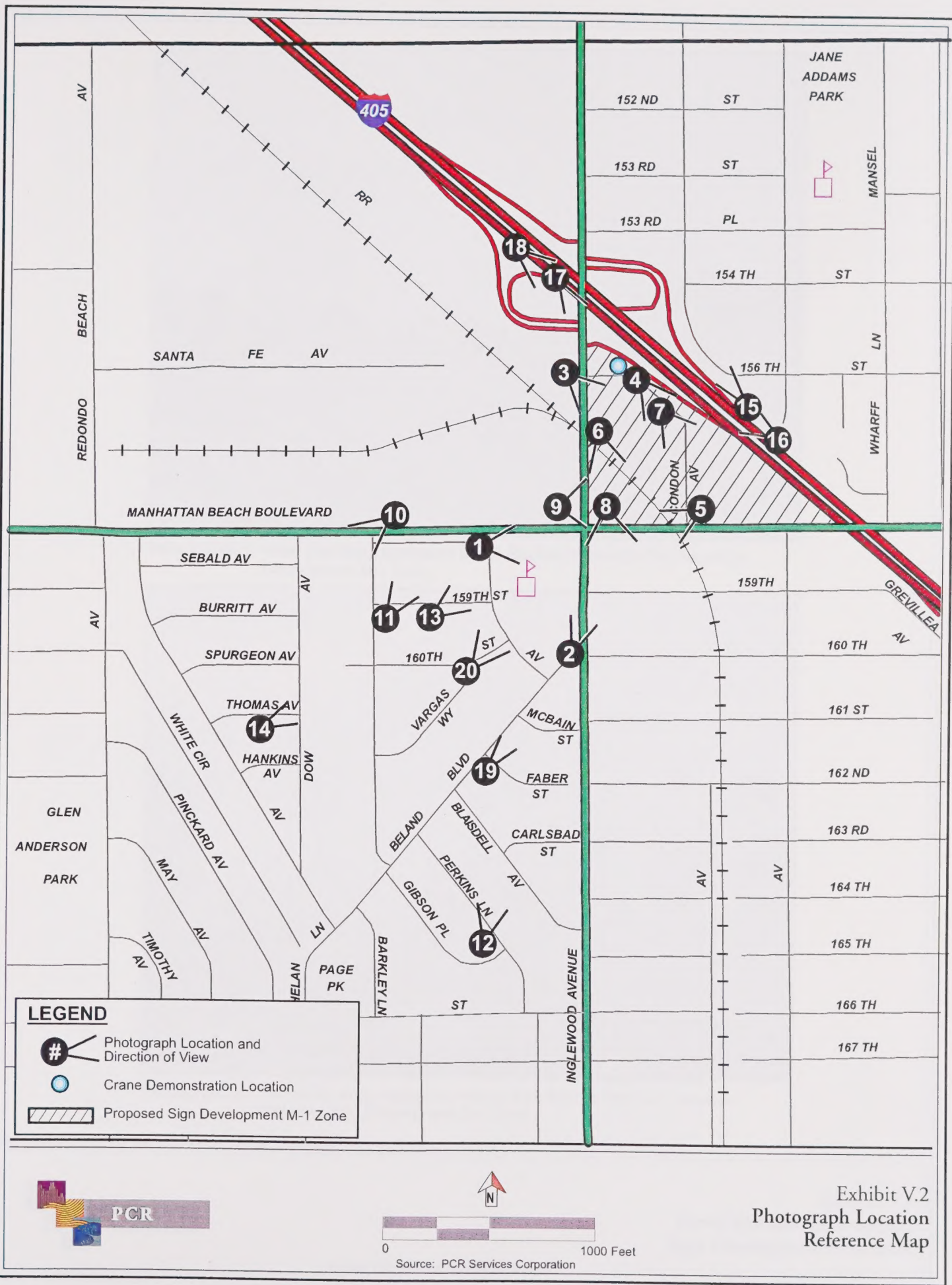
1. Environmental Setting

Existing Aesthetic Environment

The following discussion incorporates information provided in Sections IV and V of the Draft EIR supplemented by additional field observations and discussions with Lawndale city staff. The aesthetic environmental setting is presented in this section to provide a frame of reference or context against which to identify project impacts. Land uses within and proximal to The Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone are shown on **Exhibit V.1**, Surrounding Land Uses and Angle of View from Nearby Residential Locations. These surrounding land uses are shown from a 3,000-foot radius from an illustrative sign location and is based on the distance identified in Section V.B of the Draft EIR, where the proposed sign may be visible. The location and direction of view of some of the photographs provided in the Draft EIR and additional photographs taken for this revised analysis are provided on **Exhibit V.2**, Photograph Location Reference Map.

The San Diego Freeway (I-405) forms the north and northeastern border of the 20-acre Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone and is elevated approximately 20 to 25 feet above the property at this location. As shown on **Exhibit V.1**, the surrounding area to the south, southwest, and west can be generally characterized as an urban environment with primarily commercial and industrial uses along Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue and residential uses to the north, northeast, south, and southwest. The Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone is relatively level within an overall elevation of 60 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Surrounding topography slopes upward to the southwest, with a peak elevation of approximately 125 feet above MSL at Beland Boulevard and Phelan Lane approximately 3,000 feet southwest of the southern boundary of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. Land uses adjacent to this zone include a shopping center at the northwest corner of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue, the TRW plant further west along Manhattan Beach Boulevard, and other assorted commercial uses (e.g., auto repair, gas stations, restaurants) on the southwest and southeast quadrants of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue. Existing views of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone from these corridors are shown on **Exhibit V.3**, Views Towards the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. Existing nighttime lighting in area is primarily from streetlights and lighted commercial and billboard signs.







Photograph 1: View east along Manhattan Beach Boulevard towards Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone.



Photograph 2: View north along Inglewood Avenue from Beland Boulevard towards Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone.



Photograph 3: View southeast of repair facility, gas station, and assorted signs along Inglewood Avenue.



Photograph 4: View southeast of floor company at 4738 West 156th Street.



Photograph 5: View southwest of industrial building at 4701 Manhattan Beach Boulevard.



Photograph 6: View southeast of building supply company at 15708 Inglewood Avenue.

Uses within the 20-acre Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone include retail building materials and supply facilities, moving companies, outdoor advertising sign companies, gas stations, auto repair facilities, and similar uses. These commercial and industrial uses are shown on **Exhibit V.4, Existing Uses Within the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone**. There are also approximately 10 non-conforming residential uses, some with attached businesses, within this zone. Also within this zone and under the proposed ordinance, an electronic freeway message is proposed within a 200-foot-wide strip of land adjacent to and south and west of the I-405 freeway (an area of approximately 7 acres). This 7-acre Proposed Sign Location Area is shown on **Exhibit V.1**.

There are currently two billboards located within the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. One billboard, located at Condon Avenue and 156th Street, is approximately 672 sq. ft. in sign area (i.e., 14' x 48') with two signage façades and is 70 feet high. A similar billboard, located along the northeast corner of Inglewood Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, is 55 feet high. There is also a 672-sq. ft. sign located just outside this zone, southeast of the intersection of Inglewood Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, that is approximately 70 feet high. These billboards are shown on **Exhibit V.5, Surrounding Billboard Signs and Structures**.

Two other freeway billboard signs are located approximately 0.5 mile northwest of the project site, north of Marine Avenue and south of the I-405. Other nearby, freeway-oriented billboard and advertising signs are located near Ocean Gate Avenue and Rosecrans Avenue, approximately 0.75 mile northwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone, primarily associated with the Ocean Gate Mall and associated retail development.

Other prominent structures near the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone include high voltage transmission lines approximately 1,400 feet west, between Gibson Place and Dow Avenue. These are also shown on **Exhibit V.5**.

As shown on **Exhibit V.1**, nearby residentially zoned areas are located north, northeast, south, and southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. Within these residentially zoned areas, the nearest residence to the north is located approximately 300 feet (across the I-405) from the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone at Condon Avenue in Lawndale. The nearest residence south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard, along 159th Street and Firmona Avenue in Lawndale, is located approximately 250 feet from the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. The nearest residence south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and west of Inglewood Avenue, is located approximately 1,000 feet southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone, at McBain Street and Inglewood Avenue in Redondo Beach. An adult education school is also at this intersection and includes an electronic message sign approximately 20 feet high. Representative views of residential uses in Redondo Beach south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and west of Hawthorne Boulevard are shown on **Exhibit V.6, Residential Uses Southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone** (Photographs 11 and 12), and **Exhibit V.7, Residential Uses Southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone** (Photographs 13 and 14).



Photograph 7: View southeast of 70 foot high billboard above auto parts shop located at 15626 Condon Avenue.



Photograph 8: View south of 70 foot high billboard above gas station located at southeast corner of Inglewood Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard.



Photograph 9: View east of 55 foot high billboard above building supply store located at 15708 Inglewood Avenue.



Photograph 10: View west of residence and high power transmission line at the southwest corner of Gibson Place and Manhattan Beach Boulevard.



Photograph 11: Single-family residential uses along 159th Street (Redondo Beach) looking northeast.



Photograph 12: Single-family residential uses along Perkins Lane (Redondo Beach) looking northeast.



Photograph 13: Single-family residential uses along 159th Street (Redondo Beach) looking northeast with view of billboard in background.



Photograph 14: Single-family residential uses along Thomas Avenue and Dow Avenue (Redondo Beach) showing high voltage transmission lines.



Photograph 15: View from northbound I-405, banner shows height of proposed sign.



Photograph 16: View from northbound I-405, lower portion of banner shows lower limits of sign face.

Sign Regulations and Policies

Currently the placement of signs is regulated by the Lawndale Municipal Code (LMC), Section 17.76. Specifically, billboards in an M-1 zone are regulated by LMC Section 17.76.210. These regulations limit the maximum area of a billboard to 300 sq. ft. for a single-faced sign, 600 sq. ft. for a two-faced sign, and limit the maximum height to 42 feet. This code section also places limits on flashing characteristics of a billboard. In addition, a minimum distance of 500 feet measured on a radius basis shall be maintained between any two billboards. Billboards constructed in an M-1 zone require a Special Use Permit, which includes a public hearing and review by the Planning Commission. Billboards in place prior to the adoption of this ordinance (June 26, 1995) were “grandfathered” in and allowed to remain at their present size.

As shown on Exhibit V.1, land uses within 3,000 feet of the Proposed Sign Location Area extend to Hawthorne Boulevard, which encompasses the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan area. The *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*¹ includes sign regulations and guidelines for commercial advertising along Hawthorne Boulevard. These regulations and guidelines include the prohibition of pole signs, participation in a Comprehensive Sign Program which requires that on-premise signs are integrated within the overall development to achieve a unified appearance, obtaining a sign permit (per LMC Section 17.76.050), and adherence to other design guidelines regarding sign type, design, color, and architectural compatibility.

2. Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines the proposed project could result in a potentially significant Aesthetics impact if it:

- Substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- Creates a new source of substantial light and glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

3. Environmental Impacts

The proposed amendments to the LMC Section 17.76 (under both Alternative A and Alternative B Ordinance No. 876-00) would regulate and permit the construction of one billboard up to 3,400 sq. ft. in sign area (on two faces) and up to 115 feet in height within the 7-acre Proposed Sign Location Area. Components of the electronic billboard include an electronic message center portion (20' x 50' = 1,000 sq. ft.) and two three-sided advertising panels (16' x 50' = 800 sq. ft. each, for a

¹ *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, adopted by Ordinance No. 859-99 and Zone Change No. 99-01, City of Lawndale, June 7, 1999, Chapter 2, Section H and Chapter 3, Section C.

total of 12 advertisers). Copies of the proposed Alternative A and Alternative B Ordinances are included as Exhibits A-1 and A-2 of the Draft EIR. The proposed sign would be oriented perpendicular to the I-405 Freeway to allow for maximum visibility from this thoroughfare. A representation of potential visibility of the height of the proposed sign as seen from the I-405 is shown on **Exhibit V.8**, View from Northbound I-405 of Potential Sign Location, and **Exhibit V.9**, View from Southbound I-405 of Potential Sign Location.

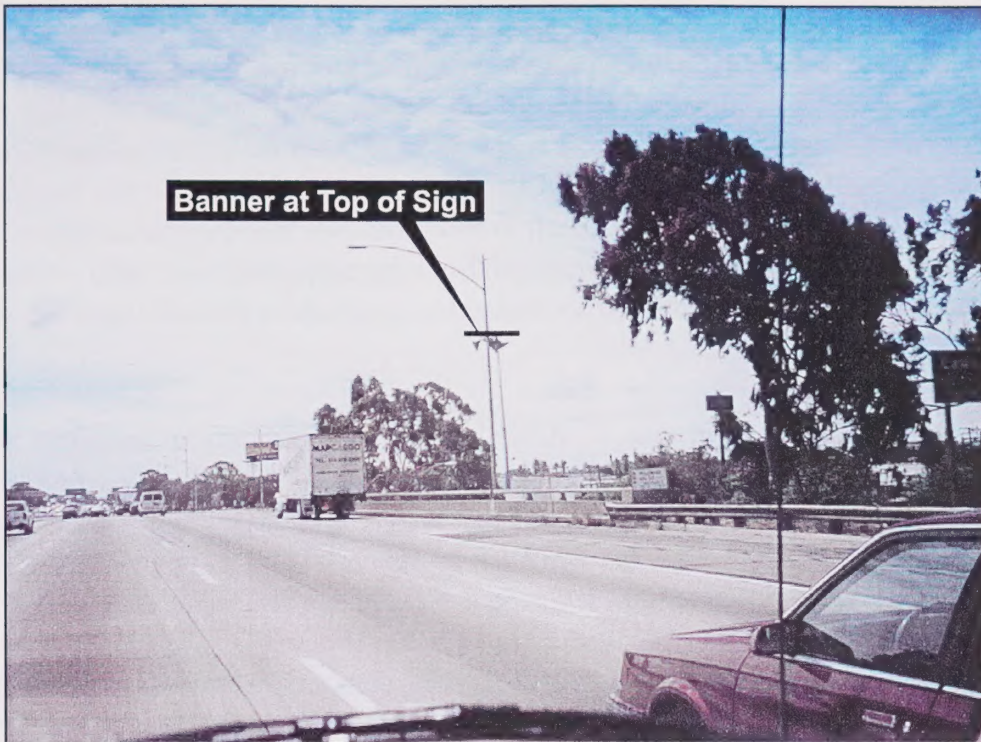
Existing Visual Character

The electronic freeway message sign is proposed in an urban area adjacent to a freeway, and industrial and commercial uses. As stated in Section V.B of the Draft EIR and based on land uses located within a 3,000-foot radius of the Proposed Sign Location Area; industrial, freeway, and commercial uses represent approximately one-third of the area that could potentially have a view of the proposed sign (see **Exhibit V.1**) and are not considered sensitive uses. In addition, the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone includes two existing billboards. Outside of this zone in the immediate vicinity one other billboard is located southeast of the intersection of Inglewood Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, and two other billboards are located near the intersection of Inglewood Avenue and Marine Avenue. Other electronic freeway message signs similar to the one being proposed, are located to the north of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone at Hollywood Park (for Hollywood Park and CarMax approximately 3.5 miles) and Fox Hills near the I-405 and 90 Freeway interchange (for Marina del Rey Ford, approximately 6.0 miles). Similar electronic freeway message signs are located to the south of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone along the I-405 at the Don Kott car dealerships (at the Avalon Boulevard exit, approximately 7.0 miles) and Carson Toyota (at the Wilmington Boulevard exit, approximately 8.5 miles).

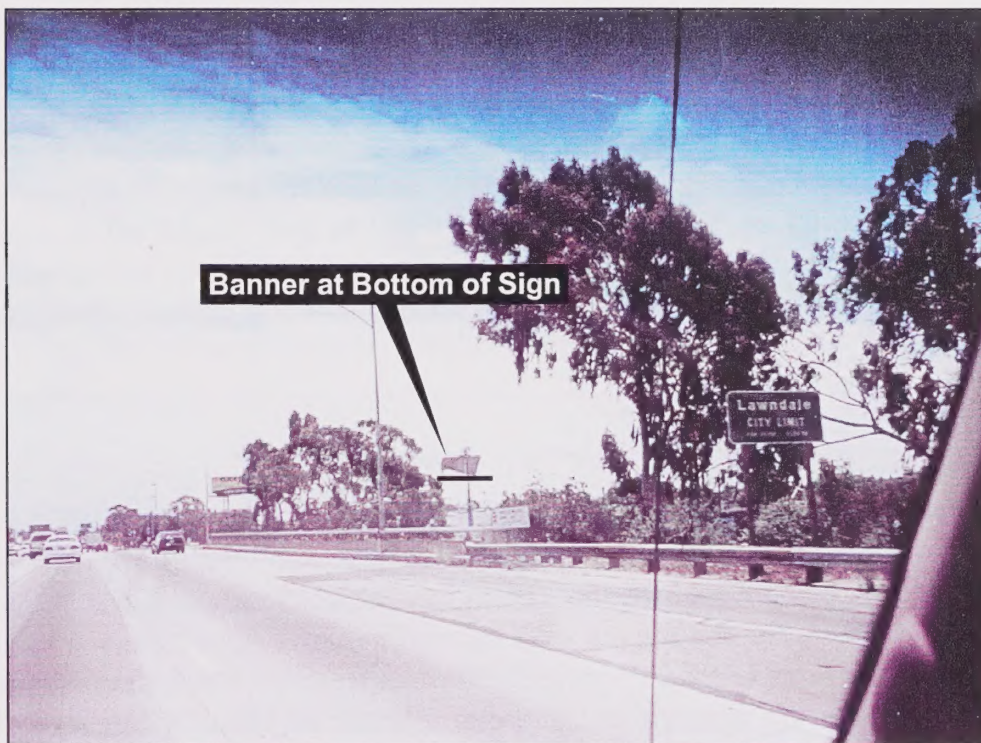
The proposed sign would be more visible than other signs in the immediate area. However, based on the adjacent commercial and industrial development (which include a variety of uses and building styles), the prominence of billboard and advertising signs, and the presence of the I-405, the proposed sign would represent another element within an urbanized area. Therefore, the effect of the proposed project on the existing visual character of the site and surrounding environment would be less than significant.

Surrounding Residential Uses

The greatest visual impact of the proposed electronic freeway message sign would be on residential uses (considered to be sensitive uses) located to the north, northeast, south, and southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. As shown on Exhibit V.1, the proposed sign would be visible from limited horizontal fields of view from some residential locations. As stated in Section V.B of the Draft EIR, the proposed sign could be considered objectionable to some residents based on five visual components: height of the sign; area (square footage) of the advertising and identification components; location of the sign in proximity to residential areas; brightness of the illuminated portions of the sign (including the concern that light from the sign would “leak” out from the side of the sign as opposed to directly in front of the sign); and the



Photograph 17: View from southbound I-405, banner shows height of proposed sign.



Photograph 18: View from southbound I-405, lower portion of banner shows lower limits of sign face.

message center component of the proposed sign that was described by some speakers as “flashing” or “blinking.” These components would be most visible, and therefore most objectionable to some residences, at night. In addition, in response to the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report, planning staff from the City of Redondo Beach identified a study area of potentially affected residential uses (i.e., the proposed sign may be visible from these locations in Redondo Beach, located approximately 1,000 feet southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone at the nearest point). (For a complete description of the study area, refer to Exhibit A-18 in the Draft EIR.) Therefore, visual impacts of the proposed project on residential uses is based, in part, on this criteria.

Height. The proposed height would be approximately 73 feet higher than billboards currently permitted in the M-1 zone and 60 feet higher than some adjacent signs in place before adoption of the current ordinance. The height of the sign would be comparable to the high voltage transmission lines located approximately 1,400 feet west of the Proposed Sign Location Area. To ascertain visibility of the proposed sign from one of several potential sign locations within the Proposed Sign Location Area, a crane was raised to a height of 115 feet on June 9, 2000. (Refer to **Exhibit V.2** for the location of the crane demonstration.) Based on this demonstration and as documented by Lawndale city staff, the proposed sign could be visible from portions of residential neighborhoods to the north and northeast (Lawndale), south (Lawndale), and southwest (Redondo Beach) as far as 3,000 feet from the Proposed Sign Location Area. However, views of the proposed sign from nearby residential areas would vary based on distance, intervening buildings, signs, and vegetation; as well as angle of view. The angle of view of the sign from the nearest residential zones to a potential sign located at a midway point within the Proposed Sign Location Area is represented on **Exhibit V.1**. As shown on this exhibit, views from these residential locations, which represent those residences with the closest and most direct view of the potential sign location, would represent a small portion of the overall field of vision (ranging from a 0.5° to 3.0° angle of view). By comparison, the field of view for most people range between 120° to 150°. In addition, views of the proposed sign would diminish based on distance and intervening buildings and vegetation as shown on **Exhibit V.10**, Illustration of Viewing Angles to the Proposed Sign from Nearby Residential Areas.

Lawndale city staff toured the study area identified by the City of Redondo Beach and confirmed that portions of the proposed sign would in fact be visible from approximately one half of the area identified by Redondo Beach. The neighborhood rises in elevation going west from Inglewood Avenue to an estimated height of 150 feet and peaks along the high voltage transmission line that bisects the area in a north-south direction between Dow Avenue and Gibson Place. West of Dow Avenue (approximately 1,400 feet at its nearest to the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone) the topography drops and it would be virtually impossible to see over the crest and down to the Proposed Sign Location Area from a two-story house, which is the tallest development permitted in that area.

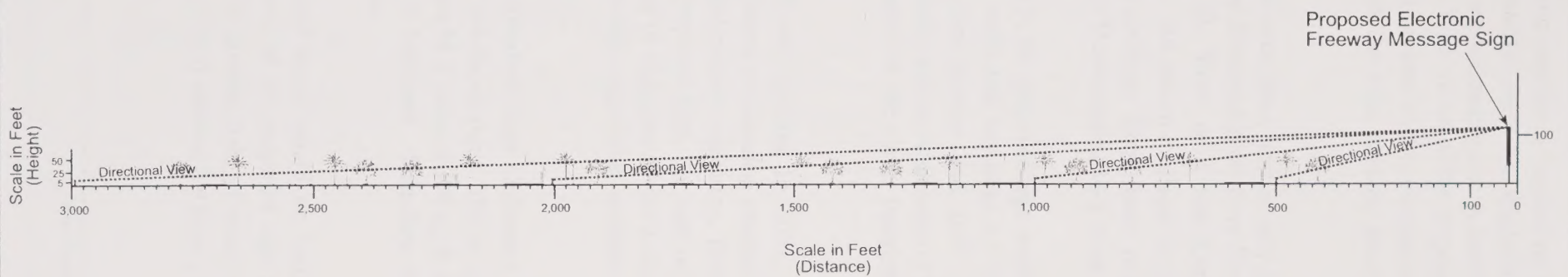


Exhibit V.10
Illustration of Viewing Angles to the Proposed Sign
from Nearby Residential Areas

Source: PCR Services Corporation, June 2001

Portions of the proposed sign would be seen from some residences located on Beland Boulevard and Vargas Way, as well as from some of the approximately 350 to 400 single-family homes in the area. The proposed sign would be most visible to the approximately one in seven homes that have added a second story. As shown on **Exhibits V.1** and **V.10**, views of the proposed sign would not be visible from many residential locations at street level because of the orientation and height of the unit, distance from the unit to the sign, orientation of the sign, existing structures, and mature vegetation.

Representative views showing the height of the sign as seen from residentially zoned areas to the southwest are shown on **Exhibit V.11**, View of Crane Demonstration from Residential Areas of Redondo Beach (Photograph 19), and **Exhibit V.12**, View of Crane Demonstration from Residential Areas of Redondo Beach (Photograph 20). As shown on these exhibits, the proposed sign would be partially visible above and between rooftops from those residential locations approximately 1,200 feet southwest of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone.

Compared to residentially zoned areas in Redondo Beach, the proposed sign would be more visible from residentially zoned areas in Lawndale located north and northeast of the Proposed Sign Location Area across the I-405 freeway (near Condon Avenue and 154th Street) and from residentially zoned areas to the south of the Proposed Sign Location Area south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard (near 159th Street and Firmona Avenue) based on the closer location and more direct angle of view, as shown on **Exhibit V.1**.

Based on an additional field survey conducted by PCR staff on May 16, 2001, views of the sign from the majority of residential areas would be indirect based on distance, orientation, and height of the unit; orientation of the sign; intervening structures; and mature vegetation. However, from some residential areas close to and with direct view of the proposed sign, the sign would create a new source of light and glare which could adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, the height of the proposed sign could result in a potentially significant aesthetic impact to some nearby residents.

Area of Sign. The proposed amendments to the Lawndale Sign Ordinance would permit a maximum sign area of 3,400 sq. ft. on each side of a two-faced sign. This is approximately ten times greater than the maximum sign area permitted in the M-1 zone of 300 sq. ft. for a single-faced sign and five times greater than the average 672-sq. ft. billboard. Therefore the proposed sign would be prominent compared to existing signs in the area.

Visibility of the proposed sign from residentially zoned areas would be limited as described previously for height. As shown on **Exhibit V.1**, views of the proposed sign from the nearest residential uses to the north in Lawndale would have the greatest field of view, or approximately 3.0°; the nearest residents to the south, also in Lawndale, would view would have a field of view of



Photograph 19: Representative view northeast showing height of sign from residential areas at Beland Boulevard and Faber Street.



Exhibit V.11
View of Crane Demonstration
from Residential Areas of Redondo Beach
(Photograph 19)

Source: City of Redondo Beach, June 9, 2000

approximately 2.5°; and residents to the southwest in Redondo Beach would have the least field of view, approximately 0.5°. As an overall comparison, the field of view for most people is 120° to 150°. Although the majority of nearby residential areas would only have a partial view of the proposed sign, it would still be prominent in comparison to existing signs. Therefore, the area of the proposed sign could result in a potentially significant aesthetic impact to some nearby residents.

Location of Sign in Proximity to Residentially Zoned Areas. The Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone is located within an industrial area and is adjacent to other industrial and commercial uses which are not considered sensitive uses, but portions of this zone are within 250 feet from residentially zoned areas south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard in Lawndale. Other residentially zoned areas to the north and northeast, across the I-405 Freeway, also in Lawndale are located as close as 300 feet from this zone. The edge of the residential area to the southwest in Redondo Beach begins about 1,000 feet from this zone. Representative horizontal viewing angles range between 0.5° to 3.0° of the overall field of vision, as shown on **Exhibit V.1**. Visibility of the proposed sign would also decrease based on the distance of the viewer, since obstructions increase as the viewing angle flattens out, as shown on **Exhibit V.10**. If the final placement of the sign is within the south or southwest portion of the Proposed Sign Location Area this could increase the angle of view, by up to approximately 5° of the overall field of view and increase visibility to residential areas to the south and southwest. Notwithstanding the overall limited views, some residents may be sensitive to the prominence of the sign, associated brightness, and message center components, especially at night. Therefore the proposed project could result in a potentially significant aesthetic impact to some nearby residential uses.

Brightness/Luminescence and Message Center. Similar to sign area, brightness/luminescence and visibility of the message center from residential areas are based on angle of view of the proposed sign and distance of viewer as shown on **Exhibits V.1** and **V.9**.

As shown on **Exhibit V.1**, industrial/commercial areas north of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and west of Inglewood Avenue, represent approximately one-third of the area from which the proposed sign could be visible, based on surrounding uses within a 3,000-foot radius that may have some views of the sign. The remaining area from which the sign may be visible is residentially developed. As previously stated, visibility of the sign would decrease with distance. Surrounding land uses and angles of view are depicted on **Exhibit V.1**. The visibility of the sign and any potentially negative impacts of that visibility also varies with the angle of the viewer to the sign. The closer the viewer is to a direct frontal view of the sign, the greater the appearance of size, and the greater the intensity of the light generated by the proposed sign. The closer the viewer is to a side view of the sign, the smaller the sign will appear (6-foot side width versus 50-foot front width), and the less any light will be visible from the sign. As shown on **Exhibit V.1**, representative views of the proposed sign from nearby residential locations are limited (based on distance and location of viewer) and range from approximately 0.5° to 3.0° of the field of view. Depending on the final placement of the sign, residents could have a greater angle of view of up to 5° if the sign is placed within the southeast portion of the Proposed Sign Location Area.

The areas of greatest visibility; i.e., most direct views of the proposed sign, are from industrial and commercial areas northwest of the intersection of Inglewood Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard and the residential area in the City of Lawndale south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and east of Firmona Avenue.

In order to minimize glare effects from the proposed sign and message center component both proposed ordinances include the following provision to reduce brightness:

- The electronic message portion of an electronic freeway sign shall not operate between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m.

The following additional provisions to reduce brightness are included in Proposed Alternative B Ordinance:

- Directional Louvers: Horizontal louvers to be above lamps/light source and angled to direct the light to the freeway. Louvers to be painted flat black to control light reflection.
- Recessed Illumination: Actual lamps/light source to be recessed back into the cabinet or enclosure so that no part of the lamp/light source protrudes out past the face of the display, thereby controlling the angle of the light towards the freeway.
- Angle of Sign to Freeway: Electronic freeway sign to be installed perpendicular to the freeway, so that each side of the sign would be viewed most directly from the freeway.
- Automatic Dimming Device: Dimming circuit to be incorporated in electronic portion of sign automatically dimming sign at night so as to reduce halo and glare.

In addition the electronic message center display frequency is restricted to four seconds on and one second off in accordance with the Outdoor Advertising Act State of California, Department of Transportation, Section 5273 of the Business and Professions Code.

Even with the restrictions provided in the proposed ordinances and existing regulations the proposed sign would create a new source of light and glare that could be visible at night to some nearby residents and could therefore be considered a potentially significant impact. Based on the above analysis, the overall aesthetic impact is determined to be potentially significant and unavoidable to some nearby residents since the prominence and brightness of the sign would introduce a visible change to the existing urban environment.

4. Cumulative Impacts

As defined under Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines, cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

As further described under CEQA Guidelines Section 15131(b), related projects may be determined by either of the following:

- A list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated further projects producing related or cumulative impacts; or
- A summary of projects contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

The Lawndale city staff identified one related project proposed in the City of Redondo Beach.² The proposed project is the development of two new billboards (four sign faces) with a maximum height of 60 feet above grade and sign area of 14' high by 48' wide (672 sq. ft.). The signs would be illuminated at night, but would not permit flashing lights or moving or rotating parts. The project site is west of I-405 and south of Marine Avenue, approximately 1,200 feet northwest of the Proposed Sign Location Area.

The Initial Environmental Study prepared for the proposed billboards concluded that "aesthetics impacts would not be significant given the existing aesthetic character of views along the freeway, and the locations of similar type billboards along the freeway in adjacent communities." However, development of an electronic freeway message sign in combination with development of the two Redondo Beach billboards could result in a potentially significant cumulative impact since both projects would be visible from street level at some residential properties within the first block east of Inglewood Avenue and north of the I-405 (at 153rd Place and 153rd Street) and from the second story of some residences east of Inglewood Avenue in Lawndale, as well as from some residences south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard in Redondo Beach.³ In addition, there are already two freeway-oriented billboards located near the I-405 and Marine Avenue.

² *City of Redondo Beach Initial Environmental Study*, No. 00-17, December 14, 2000.

³ *City of Redondo Beach Initial Environmental Study*, No. 00-17, December 14, 2000, page 13.

Other applicable planning and environmental documents that contemplate growth are the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*⁴ and *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Project Area Plan Program Environmental Impact Report*. The Program EIR estimates that the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan could allow for approximately 628,135 sq. ft., in addition to existing conditions, over the next 10 to 15 years. This land use intensification was anticipated in the *Lawndale General Plan*.⁵

As previously stated, any additional sign development that would result from new businesses locating within the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan area would be subject to sign regulations and guidelines for commercial advertising. These include the prohibition of pole signs, participation in a Comprehensive Sign Program (which requires that on-premise signs are integrated within the overall development to achieve a unified appearance), obtaining a sign permit (per LMC Section 17.76.050), and adherence to other design guidelines regarding sign type, design, color, and architectural compatibility.⁶ These regulations and guidelines would serve to reduce any cumulative impact to less than significant for development within the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan area.

In addition, these sign requirements and limitations for businesses located within the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan area are anticipated to generate a need for local businesses to utilize the additional advertising space that would be provided by the electronic freeway message sign.

5. Mitigation Measures

- Prior to the adoption of Alternative A Ordinance, the Special Use Permit for the electronic freeway message sign shall incorporate requirements for horizontal and vertical directional louvers, recessed illumination, and automatic dimming devices to minimize the visibility of off-site lighting to residential areas.
- Prior to the adoption of Alternative B Ordinance, this ordinance shall be revised to incorporate requirements for vertical directional louvers on the side of the sign to minimize the visibility of off-site lighting to residential areas.
- Prior to adoption of either Alternative A or Alternative B Ordinance, these ordinances shall be revised to incorporate restrictions to the electronic message center portion of an electronic freeway sign to limit the maximum lighting to 30 watt bulbs to minimize visibility to residential areas.

⁴ *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, op. cit.

⁵ *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Project Area Plan Program Environmental Impact Report*, City of Lawndale, June 1999, page 5.1-4.

⁶ *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, op. cit., Chapter 2, Section H and Chapter 3, Section C.

- Prior to adoption of either Alternative A or Alternative B Ordinance, these ordinances shall be revised to incorporate provisions for annual monitoring of the electronic freeway message sign to measure the effectiveness of directional louvers, reduced bulb wattage (30 watts) in the electronic message center component, and dimming devices to ensure that brightness resulting from operation of the sign is reduced to the extent feasible from residential areas.

6. Level of Significance After Mitigation

In view of the recognized subjectivity of aesthetic content and general reliance on “eye of the beholder” criteria, Lawndale city staff wishes to err on the side of conservative appraisal and concludes that the aesthetic impact of the proposed electronic freeway message sign may be considered potentially significant to some nearby residents even with the incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures and current provisions of Alternative A and Alternative B Ordinances.

In addition, cumulative aesthetics impacts could occur with the development of the electronic freeway message sign in conjunction with two proposed billboards in the City of Redondo Beach, since both of these projects would be visible from street level at some residential properties within the first block east of Inglewood Avenue and north of the I-405 (at 153rd Place and 153rd Street) and from the second story of some residences east of Inglewood Avenue in Lawndale as well as from some residences south of Manhattan Beach Boulevard in Redondo Beach. There are also two freeway-oriented billboards already located near the 405 and Marine Avenue.

C. Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would Be Involved in the Proposed Project

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) states that “[u]ses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

The proposed project would necessarily consume limited, slowly renewable, and non-renewable resources. This consumption would occur during the construction phase and would continue throughout its operational lifetime. The electronic freeway message sign would require a commitment of resources that would primarily include building materials and operational resources.

Construction of the proposed project would require the consumption of resources that are not replenishable or which may renew so slowly as to be considered non-renewable. These resources would include the following construction supplies: aggregate materials used in concrete and stucco such as sand, gravel, and stone; metals such as steel and aluminum; petrochemical construction materials such as vinyl; and water. Fossil fuels such as gasoline and oil would also be consumed in the use of construction vehicles and equipment.

The resources that would be committed during operation of the electronic freeway message sign would primarily consist of electricity for the lighting and message board components. This incremental increase in electrical consumption generated by the proposed project is not significant when compared with existing energy consumption levels citywide or regionally. That is, while the electronic freeway message sign's electronic consumption would be measurable, its magnitude would not be statistically significant when compared with regional or even citywide consumption.

Development of the proposed electronic freeway message sign would not result in the handling or generation of hazardous materials.

D. Growth Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires that an EIR “[d]iscuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic of some projects that may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.”

Development of an electronic freeway message sign would foster economic growth, since one of the objectives of the proposed project is to encourage and assist existing businesses (primarily located along Hawthorne Boulevard) by providing an affordable advertising medium. This objective is also in support of the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan* and *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan* by providing a means for these businesses to increase their gross sales and local sales taxes. As a result of increased business, additional traffic may also be generated along Hawthorne Boulevard and other local streets.

The *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Project Area Plan Program Environmental Impact Report* analyzed traffic generation based on a net increase of 628,135 sq. ft. of commercial, retail, and office use resulting in the implementation of the Hawthorne Boulevard

Specific Plan.⁷ Recommended street and alley reconstruction, signalization and circulation, and parking improvements for Hawthorne Boulevard (e.g., elimination of parking median, construction of new parking structure), Inglewood Avenue, Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Marine Avenue, and other local street improvements are provided in the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Plan for the Lawndale Economic Revitalization Project.⁸ These improvements are planned to remedy existing deficiencies and accommodate additional traffic associated with redevelopment activity. These traffic and circulation improvements would also adequately provide for any incremental increase in traffic generation associated with the proposed ordinance. Therefore the proposed sign would not be expected to generate growth and associated traffic not already programmed by the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan* and *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan* and analyzed in the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Project Area Plan Program Environmental Impact Report*. Therefore, growth inducing impacts from any additional traffic generation would not be significant.

The proposed ordinance would not result in the extension of infrastructure (such as roads and utilities) or create the need for additional housing. Therefore, no growth inducing impacts from these activities would occur.

E. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

This section describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, and evaluates the environmental impacts associated with each alternative, as required by CEQA Section 15126.6. The analysis of alternatives focuses on the alternatives capable of reducing or eliminating aesthetics and traffic impacts identified for the proposed project. Specifically, this document analyzes the following alternatives:

- No Project Alternative
- Alternative Location Alternative
- Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative
- No Electronic Message Center Alternative
- Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative

⁷ *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan and Redevelopment Project Area Plan Program Environmental Impact Report*, op. cit., page 5.1-4.

⁸ *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, op. cit., Chapter 5, Section B and *Redevelopment Plan for the Lawndale Revitalization Project*, Redevelopment Agency of the City of Lawndale, June 21, 1999, Exhibit C.

1. Project Objectives

As stated in the Draft EIR, Section III.B, the project objective is to encourage, facilitate, and regulate the construction and operation of an electronic freeway message sign in a location that will be visible to the vehicles which use the I-405 Freeway as well as establish a geographic identity for the City of Lawndale. The sign would also include not less than 10% of the reader board time for messages of the city's choice at no cost to the city.

The proposed project would support and implement the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan*, and the *Lawndale General Plan Economic Development Element*, by encouraging and assisting existing business (primarily located along Hawthorne Boulevard) to increase their gross sales and the local sales taxes. The development and operation of a freeway-oriented billboard with a message center component will provide existing businesses an affordable means to advertise to the users of the I-405 Freeway.

2. No Project Alternative

Description of No Project Alternative

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 a No Project Alternative and corresponding impacts are evaluated in this Revised Partial Draft EIR. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(3)(A) the No Project Alternative will evaluate the continuation of existing policy for signs within the M-1 zone, since the proposed project is an amendment to the current zoning regulations for signs (LMC Chapter 17.76).

Under the current zoning regulations (LMC Sections 17.76.220 and 17.76.230) which govern billboards in an M-1 zone, construction of the proposed electronic freeway message sign would not occur. Rather, the maximum area of the billboard would be limited to 300 sq. ft. for a single-faced sign and 600 sq. ft. for a two-faced sign, the height of the billboard would be limited to 42 feet, and flashing or message components would be limited to time, temperature, or smog index. A minimum 500-foot radius distance would be required between any two billboards. Construction of a sign would require a special use permit application and public hearing before the Planning Commission. Based on the size of this Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone and location of existing billboards, one additional billboard 42 feet in height and 300 sq. ft. for each sign face could feasibly be constructed under the No Project Alternative. This billboard would be less than half the area and approximately one-tenth the size of existing billboards located in this zone.

Traffic Safety

Under the No Project Alternative, a billboard could be constructed within the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone that would be visible from the I-405 and include a small message component showing time and temperature. Although the dimensions of a billboard under this alternative would be smaller and less visible to drivers than other billboards in the vicinity, the No

Project Alternative would result in a similar impact as the proposed project since no correlation between message components and accidents have been identified (see Section V.A of the Draft EIR).

Aesthetics

The No Project Alternative would permit the development of a billboard anywhere within the 20-acre Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone, which, based on location restrictions and existing uses, would feasibly permit one additional billboard. This billboard would be approximately 10 feet lower in height and half the sign areas of surrounding billboards, although it would still be visible from Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue, some residential areas, and portions of the I-405 adjacent to the project site. Therefore a billboard constructed under the No Project Alternative would not result in a noticeable change from existing visual conditions even if placed at the southern edge of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. In order for the sign to be visible from the I-405, the base of the sign would need to be at least 20 feet above the existing grade. Even with the development of a sign at this height, visibility along the I-405 may be obscured by existing vegetation and, from the northbound lane, intervening southbound traffic and the median divider, as shown on **Exhibits V.8 and V.9**. Although existing billboard lighting contributes to ambient nighttime light levels, the addition of a billboard at the scale proposed would not result in a noticeable new source of light or glare to nearby residents. Based on the height and area limits imposed on billboards within the M-1 zone, aesthetic impacts would be less than significant and much less compared to the proposed project.

Relation of the Alternative to the Project Objectives

The No Project Alternative would not achieve the objectives of the proposed project. Due to the reduced height (by more than half), area (by approximately one-tenth), and message component, the No Project Alternative would not be highly visible from the I-405 nor be able to provide low cost advertising to multiple local businesses. The elimination of low cost advertising space (i.e., advertising space for two businesses versus 12) and reduced visibility would also fail to support and implement the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan*, and *Lawndale General Plan Economic Element*. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not be of sufficient height or area to provide a geographic identity for the City of Lawndale. The No Project Alternative would thus be inferior to the proposed project with respect to achieving applicable project objectives.

Comparison to Other Alternatives

Compared to the other alternatives, the No Project Alternative would have a similar effect on traffic safety. The No Action Alternative would have the least effect on aesthetics than the other alternatives since this alternative proposes the lowest height (42 feet) and area (300 feet for each sign face).

3. Alternative Location Alternative

Description of Alternative Location

Based on a comment received on the Initial Study for the proposed project (see Exhibit A-8 and A-3 in the Draft EIR), Lawndale city staff evaluated the construction of an electronic freeway message sign at the southwest corner of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Hawthorne Boulevard, north of the I-405 and approximately 500 feet southeast of the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone. The size of this sign would be the same height and area as the proposed project and would include an electronic message center component. This alternative location is zoned C-3 and would also require a zoning code amendment to permit the development of the proposed electronic freeway message sign.

Traffic Safety

Under the Alternative Location Alternative, a billboard and message center would be constructed that would be visible from the I-405. The overall visibility of the sign under this alternative would be greater than other freeway-oriented billboards due to the greater sign height (115' compared to 70'), area (3,400 sq. ft. compared to 672 sq. ft.), and inclusion of a message center. This increased visibility could result in traffic slowing but not an increase in accidents. (See Section V.A of the Draft EIR.) Therefore the Alternative Location Alternative would result in a less-than-significant impact on traffic safety. This impact is similar to the proposed project.

Aesthetics

The Alternative Location Alternative would permit the development of a billboard that is larger in height (115' compared to 70') and area (3,400 sq. ft. compared to 672 sq. ft.) than surrounding billboards and would include two 3-sided advertising panels and a message center. The sign would be visible from motorists of the I-405 from this location. This site is buffered from residential areas to the north and west by commercial uses and to the south by the I-405. The distance to the nearest residential zone would be similar to the Proposed Sign Development M-1 Zone (approximately 250 feet).

Although this alternative site is separated from adjacent residential uses, the development of an electronic freeway message sign at this location would have an overall greater visibility to residential areas located to the north, south, east, and west compared to the proposed project, since the sign would be visible from a larger number of residential areas in Lawndale. However, views of the sign from this alternative location would be substantially reduced from residential uses in Redondo Beach.

Relation of the Alternative to the Project Objectives

The Alternative Location Alternative would achieve all of the objectives of the proposed project. This alternative would be visible from the I-405 and provide a geographic identity for the City. This alternative would also include two tri-vision panels that would provide affordable advertising space to 12 local businesses at a time and an electronic message center to widely advertise community

events. Therefore this alternative would fully support and implement the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan*, and *Lawndale General Plan Economic Element*. The Alternative Location Alternative would thus be similar to the proposed project with respect to achieving applicable project objectives.

Comparison to Other Alternatives

Compared to the other alternatives, the Alternative Location Alternative would have a similar effect on traffic safety. The Alternative Location Alternative would have a greater effect on aesthetics than the other alternatives due to the increased visibility from nearby residential areas in the Lawndale and larger height and sign area. However, this alternative would reduce aesthetic impacts to residents located in Redondo Beach.

4. Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative

Description of Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative

Under the Reduce Height and Sign Area Alternative the height of the sign would be 71 feet and corresponding sign area would be 2,550 sq. ft. (50' x 51') for each sign face. This would include the identification display (12'), one three-sided advertising panel (19'), and electronic message center (20') with the base of the sign at 20 feet above grade. This height is similar to the existing 70-foot-high billboard located at Condon Avenue and 156th Street.

Traffic Safety

Under the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative, a billboard and message center would be constructed within the project site that would be visible from the I-405. The height of a billboard under this alternative would be similar to other freeway-oriented billboards in the vicinity. However, the overall visibility of the sign under this alternative would be greater than other freeway-oriented billboards due to the greater sign area (2,550 sq. ft. per sign face compared to 672 sq. ft.) and the inclusion of a message center. This increased visibility could result in traffic slowing but not an increase in accidents. (See Section V.A of the Draft EIR.) Therefore the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would result in a less-than-significant impact on traffic safety. This impact is similar to the proposed project.

Aesthetics

The Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would permit the development of a billboard that is similar in height (71') but larger in area (2,550 sq. ft.) than surrounding billboards and would also include an electronic message center. Since the base of the sign would be at grade level of the I-405, the sign would be visible from this location although portions of the base of the sign (including the advertising panel) may be obscured by existing vegetation and, from the northbound lane, intervening southbound traffic and the median divider (see **Exhibits V.8 and V.9**). Due to the height, area, and brightness of the sign under this alternative, the sign would be visible from residential areas to the north, northeast, south, and southwest. Although there is ambient nighttime illumination from commercial signs, billboards, and streetlights in the project area, the sign would

increase nighttime illumination in the area above current conditions that would be visible to nearby residents. Since the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would still be visible to nearby residential areas and result in a new source of glare, aesthetic impacts under this alternative would be considered potentially significant.

The Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative represents a decrease in height (38%) and area (25%) compared to the proposed project. Based on the corresponding decrease in visibility from residential areas, aesthetic impacts under the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would be somewhat less than the proposed project.

Relation of the Alternative to the Project Objectives

The Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would achieve some of the objectives of the proposed project. This alternative would be visible from the I-405 and provide a geographic identity and message component for the City of Lawndale. However, due to the elimination of one of the three-sided advertising panels, advertising space would be limited to six businesses instead of 12. In addition, portions of this advertising panel may be obscured by existing vegetation particularly to northbound motorists on the I-405. These two factors could increase advertising costs to local businesses while not providing optimal visibility from the I-405. Therefore this alternative would fail to support and implement the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan*, and *Lawndale General Plan Economic Element*. The Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would thus be inferior to the proposed project with respect to achieving applicable project objectives.

Comparison to Other Alternatives

Compared to the other alternatives, the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would have a similar effect on traffic safety. The Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would have a greater effect on aesthetics than the No Action Alternative, but a lesser effect than the No Electronic Message Center Alternative and Alternative Location Alternative due to decreased sign area and height. Aesthetics impacts under this alternative would be similar to the Reduced Permit Development Area Alternative, since both alternatives would reduce visibility from nearby residential areas.

5. No Electronic Message Center Alternative

Description of the No Electronic Message Center Alternative

Under the No Electronic Message Center Alternative the height of the sign would be 93'-6", and the corresponding sign area would be 2,750 sq. ft. (50' x 55') for each sign face. This would include the top and bottom identification display (20') and two three-sided advertising panels (35'), with the base of the sign 38'-6" above grade.

Traffic Safety

Under the No Electronic Message Center Alternative, a billboard would be constructed within the project site that would be visible from the I-405. The height and area of a billboard under this alternative would be greater than other freeway-oriented billboards in the vicinity (94' compared to 70' and 2750 sq. ft. compared to 672 sq. ft., respectively). This increased visibility is expected to have a negligible impact on traffic safety. (See Section V.A of the Draft EIR.) Therefore the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative would result in a less-than-significant impact on traffic safety. This impact is similar to the proposed project.

Aesthetics

The No Electronic Message Center Alternative would permit the development of a billboard that is larger in height (94' compared to 70') and area (2750 sq. ft. compared to 672 sq. ft.) than surrounding billboards and would include two three-sided advertising panels. The sign would be visible from this location although portions of the base of the sign may be obscured by existing vegetation and, from the northbound lane, intervening southbound traffic and the median divider (see **Exhibits V.8 and V.9**). Due to the height and area, the sign would be visible from residential areas to the north, northeast, south, and southwest. Although there is ambient nighttime illumination from commercial signs, billboards, and streetlights in the project area, the sign would increase nighttime illumination in the area above current conditions and therefore would be visible to some nearby residents. Since the No Electronic Message Center Alternative would still be visible to nearby residential areas and result in a new source of lighting, aesthetic impacts under this alternative would be considered potentially significant.

The No Electronic Message Center Alternative represents a decrease in height (18%) and area (20%) compared to the proposed project. Based on the corresponding decrease in visibility from residential areas and the absence of a message board component, aesthetic impacts under the No Electronic Message Center Alternative would be less than the proposed project.

Relation of the Alternative to the Project Objectives

The No Electronic Message Center Alternative would achieve some of the objectives of the proposed project. This alternative would be visible from the I-405 and provide a geographic identity for the City of Lawndale. This alternative would also include two three-sided advertising panels that would provide affordable advertising space to 12 local businesses at a time. However, the elimination of the message board component would not allow the City to widely advertise community events thus compromising the objective of establishing a geographic identity for the City and assisting local businesses. In addition, portions of the lower advertising panel may be obscured by existing vegetation particularly to northbound motorists on the I-405. Therefore this alternative would only partially support and implement the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan*, and *Lawndale General Plan Economic Element*. The No Electronic Message Center Alternative would thus be inferior to the proposed project with respect to achieving applicable project objectives.

Comparison to Other Alternatives

Compared to the other alternatives, the No Electronic Message Center Alternative would have a similar effect on traffic safety. In comparison to the No Project Alternative and Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative, the No Electronic Message Center Alternative would have a greater effect on aesthetics due to the greater sign area and height. Aesthetic impacts would be similar to the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative since both alternatives would reduce visibility from nearby residential areas. The No Electronic Message Center Alternative would have a lesser impact on aesthetics compared to the Alternative Site Alternative since the sign would be visible to fewer residential areas.

6. Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative

Description of the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative

Under the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative the height of the sign and sign area would be the same as the proposed project. Development would be limited to the northern portion of the northeast quadrant of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue, southwest of and parallel to the I-405, along a 200-foot-wide by 750-foot-long strip of land (approximately 3.5 acres).

Traffic Safety

Under the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative, a billboard and message center would be constructed within a 3.5-acre area that would be visible from the I-405. The overall visibility of the sign under this alternative would be greater than other freeway-oriented billboards due to the greater sign height (115' compared to 70'), area (3,400 sq. ft. compared to 672 sq. ft.), and inclusion of a message center. This increased visibility could result in traffic slowing but not an increase in accidents. (See Section V.A of the Draft EIR.) Therefore, the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would result in a less-than-significant impact on traffic safety. This impact is similar to the proposed project.

Aesthetics

The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would permit the development of a billboard that is larger in height (115' compared to 70') and area (3,400 sq. ft. compared to 672 sq. ft.) than surrounding billboards and would include two three-sided advertising panels and a message center. The sign would be visible from motorist of the I-405 from this location. Due to the height, area, and brightness under this alternative, the sign would be visible from residential areas to the north, northeast, south, and southwest. Although there is ambient nighttime illumination from commercial signs, billboards, and streetlights in the project area, the sign would increase nighttime illumination in the area above current conditions that would be visible to nearby residents. Since the Reduced Permitted Development Alternative would still be visible to nearby residential areas and result in a new source of glare, aesthetic impacts under this alternative would be considered potentially significant.

The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would be located approximately 1,000 feet from the nearest residence, compared to 250 feet for the proposed project. Based on this increased distance and corresponding decrease in visibility from residential areas to the south and southwest, aesthetic impacts under the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would be less than the proposed project.

Relation of the Alternative to the Project Objectives

The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would achieve all of the objectives of the proposed project. This alternative would be visible from the I-405 and provide a geographic identity for the City. This alternative would also include two tri-vision panels that would provide affordable advertising space to 12 local businesses at a time and an electronic message center to widely advertise community events. Therefore this alternative would fully support and implement the *Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan*, *Lawndale Economic Revitalization Plan*, and *Lawndale General Plan Economic Element*. The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would thus be similar to the proposed project with respect to achieving applicable project objectives.

Comparison to Other Alternatives

Compared to the other alternatives, the Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would have a similar effect on traffic safety. The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would have a greater effect on aesthetics than the No Project Alternative due to greater sign area, height, and inclusion of the message center component. The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would be similar to the Reduced Height and Sign Area Alternative and No Message Board Alternative since all of these alternatives would reduce visibility from nearby residential areas. The Reduced Permitted Location Area Alternative would have a lesser impact on aesthetics compared to the Alternative Site Alternative since the sign would be visible to fewer residential areas.

7. Environmentally Superior Alternative

Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines states that an analysis of alternatives to a proposed project shall identify an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives evaluated in an EIR. The Guidelines also state that if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR shall identify another environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives.

A detailed description of the potential impacts associated with each alternative is provided above. Pursuant to Section 15126.6(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, the analysis below addresses the ability of the alternatives to “avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects” of the project.

Of the alternatives analyzed in this document, the No Project Alternative is considered the overall environmentally superior alternative, since development of a sign under this alternative would

reduce traffic safety and aesthetic impacts to less-than-significant levels. Thus, no significant impacts would occur under this alternative. However, as indicated in the discussion of the No Project Alternative, this alternative would not meet any of the physical, economic, or operational objectives established for the proposed project.

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines requirement to identify an environmentally superior alternative other than the No Project Alternative, a comparative evaluation of the remaining alternatives indicates that the Reduced Permitted Development Alternative would be environmentally superior. Relative to the proposed Project, this alternative would result in reduced aesthetic impacts due to the increased distance and corresponding reduction in visibility from residential uses to the south and southwest. However, this impact would still remain significant. Therefore, although the Reduced Permitted Development Alternative would generally reduce the significant aesthetic impact occurring under the proposed project, it would not reduce this impact to less-than-significant level. Under the Reduced Permitted Development Alternative, traffic safety impacts would be similar to the proposed project and would remain less than significant. Additionally, the Reduced Permitted Development Alternative would achieve all of the physical, economic, and operational objectives established for the proposed project.

**PCR SANTA MONICA**

233 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 130
Santa Monica, CA 90401
TEL 310.451.4488
FAX 310.451.5279
EMAIL info@pcrnet.com

PCR IRVINE

One Venture
Suite 150
Irvine, CA 92618
TEL 949.753.7001
FAX 949.753.7002
EMAIL info@pcrnet.com

